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Comptroller of the Currency  
Administrator of National Banks

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Washington, DC 20219

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To OCC Subscribers:

While I was in Albuquerque, New Mexico for a public hearing during the Community Reinvestment Act reform in 1994, I met then-Navajo President Peterson Zah, who invited me to visit the Navajo Nation in order to see firsthand the lack of credit and banking services on the reservation. I accepted his invitation and was astonished to learn when I got there that private mortgage lending in Indian country was almost non-existent. In the heart of the reservation, at a first-of-its-kind meeting with tribal officials and national banks, I heard about the legal issues associated with mortgage lending on trust land.

When I returned from my trip, I created OCC's Native American Working Group to address banking issues unique to Indian country and to assist national banks that choose to explore market opportunities in Indian country. Much of the information in this guide is a result of research done by the working group.

The purpose of the *Guide to Mortgage Lending in Indian Country* is to provide guidance to national banks about how the mortgage lending process differs in Indian country. The resources provided in this booklet should help bankers learn more about doing business in Indian country and provide information on how banks can safely and soundly extend mortgage loans using Native American trust lands as collateral. The guide reflects OCC's commitment to addressing the problems impeding access to credit and other financial services for Native American communities.

For additional information, please contact OCC Community Development Division at (202) 874-4930.

Sincerely,

Eugene A. Ludwig  
Comptroller